

help communities get back on track for recovery and economic revitalization in the wake of a major disaster. Communities use these disaster relief funds to repair damaged public infrastructure, such as sewer and drinking water systems, and States use the EDA grants to create and coordinate efficient disaster response and recovery plans.

Additionally, local governments and nonprofits can lend EDA disaster relief funds to businesses to help our private sector to rebuild and to grow. Congress has recognized the value of this program in the past. During the past 5 years, we have provided more than \$550 million in EDA emergency disaster relief funds. This includes \$500 million in emergency supplemental funding for EDA in 2008 to respond to the hurricanes that devastated the South and the heavy rains that caused massive flooding throughout the Midwest.

When these areas were in need, Congress came together and extended a helping hand. Unfortunately, we have to do so again now. The funding in my amendment complies with the disaster relief provisions included in the Budget Control Act and is not offset with cuts from other programs in the bill. When disaster strikes, victims don't want us to reach for the budget ax, they want us to help them rebuild and recover.

We all recognize our country faces serious fiscal challenges, but we cannot put a price on human lives. Nothing is more important than protecting our communities, our families, and our economy. Hurricane Irene and many other natural disasters hit our country this year, causing widespread damage that is going to require a massive rebuilding effort. The American people are looking to us, to the Federal Government, to lend a helping hand.

I point again to the picture of what a disaster such as this can do, where water is virtually up to the second floors, and this was repeated across the State of New Jersey and in many other States as a result of hurricane Irene.

With that, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment. Although there are squabbles about funding for various programs, at no time is the help more urgently needed than now—again, right after these storms have hit, leaving terrible devastation and people urging and pleading with us to give them the help. I urge my colleagues to support the amendment.

With that, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we have worked long and hard this whole week trying to move forward on the legislation dealing with our appropriations

bills. It has been difficult, and one reason it has been difficult is this is kind of a new area we are working in; that is, legislating. I was very impressed to see Senator MIKULSKI talk with great clarity about how nice it was for her to again be legislating.

But we are not there yet. We were hoping to have a number of votes today—tonight—but we haven't been able to do that. We are getting close. Our staffs are working very hard to come up with an agreement we hope we can do tonight, to set up a series of four to six votes in the morning and then, hopefully, a pathway to completing this legislation.

We have other issues. Always we have to do more than one thing at a time. So we will move forward, the Republican leader and I, on filing a couple of cloture motions that we are going to set up for votes either Friday or hopefully we can get them done tomorrow.

Mr. MCCONNELL. If I can make just a couple remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. We do have a number of amendments pending, and we are working our way in the direction of getting back to a normal process. I share the majority leader's hope and his view that we will have a number of votes, hopefully tomorrow, as a result of an agreement we are working on.

TEACHERS AND FIRST RESPONDERS BACK TO WORK ACT OF 2011—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 204, S. 1723.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 204, S. 1723, a bill to provide for teacher and first responder stabilization.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have a cloture motion at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close the debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 204, S. 1723, Teachers and First Responders Back to Work Act.

Harry Reid, Robert Menendez, Daniel Inouye, Herb Kohl, Sheldon Whitehouse, Jack Reed, Jeff Bingaman, Barbara Mikulski, Patty Murray, Debbie Stabenow, Richard Durbin, Sherrod Brown, Richard Blumenthal, Bernard Sanders, Robert Casey, Jr., Jeff Merkley, Patrick Leahy, Tom Harkin.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call under rule XXII be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I withdraw my motion to proceed to Calendar No. 204.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is withdrawn.

The minority leader.

WITHHOLDING TAX RELIEF ACT OF 2011—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed to Calendar No. 205, S. 1726, and I send a cloture motion to the desk.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to S. 1726, the Withholding Tax Relief Act of 2011.

James Inhofe, David Vitter, Mike Crapo, Kelly Ayotte, Roy Blunt, Johnny Isakson, Jeff Sessions, Mike Lee, Saxby Chambliss, Tom Coburn, Jon Kyl, Susan Collins, Ron Johnson, Pat Roberts, Richard Burr, Lamar Alexander.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I now withdraw my motion to proceed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is withdrawn.

The majority leader.

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF 2012—Continued

Mr. REID. Mr. President, as I indicated earlier, we have tried most all day to have some votes. We were unable to do that. We are not going to have any more votes tonight. I have spoken with the Republican leader. We have done the best we can for today. There will be more business on the floor this evening; hopefully, we will be able to set up some votes tomorrow. So I apologize to everyone for not being able to have some votes or to have some way of moving forward, but we have done, as I indicated, the best we can.

I guess the good news is some people will be able to watch the World Series.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 869

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. As you know, Mr. President, Hurricane Irene and